

Witchcraft Delusion.
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George Jacobs, the Wizard. 1692.

Old Gallows Hill, — a gibbet dread, — a cart
Weighed down with heavy load of Satan's kin,
By gaping crowd reviled; — oldest in sin,
A feeble tottering man whose stubborn heart
Confession scorns. He loves the Tempter's
 night;

So 'round his neck the hangman's rope is coiled;
He swings in air! The Devil now is foiled!
The people shout! Oh, t'is a goodly sight!

'Neath his own trees, by grandson borne that
 night,

In trembling and in fear, by all forsook,
No sound save hoot of owl in murder's flight,
The wizard's corse was laid, despised and lone.
All knew his name was writ in Black-man's
 book;

All knew the Devil had him for his own.

St. George of old Northfields. 1891.

Two hundred years have flown and now to-night
Beside the wizard's grave we muse. The sky,
The rippling waves, the vales where shadows
 lie

Are all the same as met our father's sight.
Unchanged the outer man, but mind and heart
Released from Superstition's baneful sway,
With vision all unclouded, clear as day
In old beliefs of Satan, take no part.

To us a martyr seems this wizard old,
With soul so brave and true he would not lie
E'en though the gibbet dread and scorn so cold
Wer' his. God was his strength. He chose to
 die.

St. George of old Northfields! Is ours the blame
If to this man our lips apply this name?

—Herri t Patnam Fowler, 2nd.

John Tarbell.

A SALEM VILLAGE FARMER OF THE
WITCHCRAFT TIMES.

Remarks of Nathan M. Hawkes at a reunion of
descendants of Rebecca Nurse, at the old
homestead, Danvers, July 30, 1890.

It is said that each new generation
finds a love stronger than the tie that
binds it to the generation before it.
The assertion is not true so far as a
certain class of minds is concerned.
There is an element in every strong

stock that shows its poetry and senti-
ment and reverence in its recital of the
deeds of its ancestors. The blue-eyed
Norwegian on his frozen fiords chants
the prowess of earlier days. The griz-
zled Scottish piper awakes the echoes
of lake and moor with the deeds of
Robert Bruce and the wearers of the
tartan down into the dim vista of time.

The Hebrew patiently teaches his son
his genealogy in unbroken line back
to David and Moses and Abraham.
The true Englishman glories in the
halo that surrounds the great Eliza-
beth and in the prosaic vigor that stirs
sluggish blood with the story of Crom-
well and his Ironsides.

The same devotion possesses you,
my friends, of the New England Pu-
ritan stock. I want to talk with you for
a few moments of an humble man of
Salem Village who lived through the
most terrible visitation that God ever
suffered to fall upon his people in our
land and who was raised up to be the
scourge of the oppressor when the bitter
moral cyclone had passed by.

"The records of families constitute
the framework of history and are aux-
iliaries to science, religion, and espec-
ially to civilization. The ties of kin-
dred are the golden links in the chain
which ties families, states, and nations
together in one great bond of humanity.
He who collects his own family history
is not only a benefactor in his way,
but will deserve and receive the grate-
ful thanks of all future generations.
He confers a priceless boon upon those
whose names and achievements are
thus rescued from oblivion and pre-
serves the experience and wisdom of
ages for the emulation and admiration
of posterity."

Bearing in mind this lofty estimate
of the position of those who seek to
portray the traits of their ancestors, it
is with somewhat of diffidence that I
call your attention to John Tarbell, who

married Mary Nurse, the daughter of Rebecca Nurse, the good saint at whose shrine you worship to-day. The wretched story of the witchcraft delusion in general and its relation to Rebecca Nurse in particular is branded too deeply into all our minds to need or bear a rehearsal. It is enough to say that through all her troubles she was

sustained by the loving hearts of husband, sons, daughters and sons-in-law.

They could not avert her doom, but John Tarbell girded up his loins and prepared for the day when the returning common sense of the magistrates, clergy and people should give him the righteous privilege of driving out in disgrace the false shepherd who let loose the foul monster that played such havoc, that wrought such ruin to Christian homes and lives.

Though the art of photography did not exist in the seventeenth century and no oil paintings have come down to us from the actors in the stirring scenes of Salem Village, I can see the man, John Tarbell, as clearly as if his pictured self were on the wall.

The traits and the physical likenesses of the race have been maintained through all the generations. The description which was given of the late Judge and General Jonathan Tarbell of New York, has been compared with many individuals of the family and it exactly fits in each case; so that this sketch will be found to be an accurate portrait of John Tarbell, the antagonist of Rev. Samuel Parris. "He was as a man of highest character and integrity. He was modest and retiring almost to diffidence, firm and decided. In person he was tall, about six feet, dark complexion, dark iron gray hair and gray eyes."

The zoologist reconstructs a lost species from a single bone and presents to us the organism as it once walked

the earth. Our ight upon the tragedy of Danvers Village enclosing act is vastly stronger. has not vexed nature much in locality. The solemn, substantial house of Francis and Rebecca Nurse still looks upon a rural landscape. It is little changed since the day its best room was the scene of the marriage of Mary Nurse to John Tarbell, October 25, 1678—since its venerable mistress cast her last fond look upon it ere she was dragged to prison March 25, 1692—since Samuel Nurse came back to take possession of the desolate homestead of his parents. The grass annually springs up anew on Deacon Ingersoll's training-field. A granite post marks the site of the old parsonage where Samuel Parris met in disputation to his own overthrow the rude but logical avengers of a mother's wrongs.

Writing in the parish church records, as plainly, as minutely as if no other human eyes were to read the story, Mr. Parris with the thoroughness of a Jesuit father has daguerreotyped the actors and the accessories.

Mr. Upham with the surgeon's scalpel has dissected the hearts and with a metaphysician's art has analyzed the motives of all the characters on the board.

The principal figures in the retributive act are few but strong. On the one side is the clerical pyrotechnist, Mr. Parris, backed by the awful powers of a Puritan priesthood, powers hitherto as unassailable as the Inquisition in Spain, the magistrates of the colony, his own church, and apparently the great majority of the people.

On the other side were three unlettered husbandmen. Peter Cloyse was

quicken'd by the gallant fight Nurse and Tarbell were making against unequal odds as to numbers. So he came down from Middleton to reinforce them. A community of interest and affection made Samuel Nurse and John Tarbell one. Their friendship was as that of David and Jonathan.

These three, Nurse, Wilkins and Tarbell, were an invincible trio who deserve to be remembered by lovers of justice so long as man shall cherish examples of moral heroism and devotion.

From August, 1692, to July, 1697, John Tarbell and Samuel Parris had their eyes fixed upon each other. Each had his guard up and they faced each other like two gladiators. They were each wary, sleepless and adroit. In every record in Mr. Parris' book whatever other names appeared or were missing that of Tarbell was found. In all the papers, civil or ecclesiastical, during the long tournament, whoever else was present, absent or unaccounted for, John Tarbell is recorded in the thickest of the fray. He was the Black Knight of Ivanhoe, his unconquered lance ever at poise to succor his friends and to win the cause of the right.

The issue as made up was simple. Mr. Parris saw that he must stamp out smouldering embers of discontent or himself perish in the impending ruin of the hideous edifice of which he was the master builder. The offended brethren welcomed the purification by fire; they scorned a temporizing policy,

guaranteed against a rescue.

It was one of the most dramatic ecclesiastical duels that the annals of history record. The scene was in a country village as fair as the garden of Eden before the serpent entered. The participants were all members of the same Christian church—the church in the bosom of which they had all sought refuge from persecutions abroad.

At first the pastor took the offensive. He essayed to drive the obnoxious brethren without the pale of the church-fold. They defended with the weapons of the faith. They attempted to meet him according to the scriptural usage as laid down in the gospel according to St. Matthew xviii: 15-17. He parried and passed. The pastor lost ground with the public. Clerical councils were invoked and assembled. The ministers advised Mr. Parris to quit. He was dogged and his obstinacy continually lost him adherents. Driven to bay, Mr. Parris finally invoked the civil courts. All the time the storm was gathering against him.

In the last scene in the arena of the civil court, John Tarbell, Samuel Nurse, Joseph Putnam and Daniel Andrew appeared as the attorneys for the people of the village,—time and place, Boston, July 21, 1697.

This was the beginning of the end. From the position of being one of the three malcontents in the church, John Tarbell had become the head of the people and their spokesman before the court of final jurisdiction, which commanded the dismissal of the discredited minister.

He gained the parish, the church, and the people. The civil powers asserted themselves as superior to the ecclesiastical.

The friends of Rebecca Nurse had vindicated her memory, but they had done more than that. They had achieved a spiritual revolution. They subtracted the dangers of priestcraft from the problems of New England civilization.

133 Later John Tarbell and Samuel Nurse served upon the parish committee which had the felicity to call that admirable man, Rev. Joseph Green, as pastor, who bound up the wounds and brought rest and Christian fellowship to the people. In 1700 he was upon the Standing Committee. John Tarbell does not disappear

though serenity and peace watch over him and his in happy old age. Such men do not die. He transmitted his blood and his contest against wrong to later generations. His son, Deacon Cornelius Tarbell, was an active factor in the separation between Danvers and Salem. He was one of the first Board of Selectmen, chosen on the 4th of March, 1752. By one of the strange retributions of fate, Cornelius Tarbell was a deacon of the Village Church for the long period of twenty-one years.

His grandson, Jonathan Tarbell, marched with the Danvers boys to Lexington on the fateful morning of April 19, 1775, and was in the immortal combat where once "the embattled farmers stood and fired the shot heard round the world." His spirit still lived on and another Jonathan Tarbell served with gallantry and distinction through the war of the Rebellion in the armies that saved the nation which he and such as he made possible.

In this nineteenth century of ours people who had suffered as John Tarbell and his family had, would be very apt to seek consolation in infidelity or materialism—would be prone to condemn the church and the state which had been used as the instrumentalities inflicting their pain.

No such a course fortunately for us was possible to the English Puritan intellect in the seventeenth century. Their one book, the Bible, and their keen brains in hardy bodies clearly taught them that reform must come within and not without the church. They clearly saw that the trunk of the tree of the church was sound and that lopping off diseased limbs would improve its symmetry and promote its growth. They kept within the church,

but they marked an era in the broadening of the race—they taught the practical lesson which was new to the Christian world, namely, that priests were ministers and not masters.

The people at large did not wholly believe in dæmonology; they were overawed by their surroundings, but they were so devout that they followed or were silenced for the time being by the voices of their spiritual teachers. When the clergy lost their heads, when they began to doubt, the sturdy common sense of the laymen came to the rescue and called a halt. It is doubtful if the clerical spirit ever rallied from the reaction that came after the collapse of so-called witchcraft. Who dares

say that Salem Village, New England, and the world are not happier, better, and wiser because the people of that day asserted the right of individual thought?

With all our respect for the church and its traditions, the thinkers of to-day realize that the New England town meeting struck deeper root, made a broader civilization than any creed or preaching.